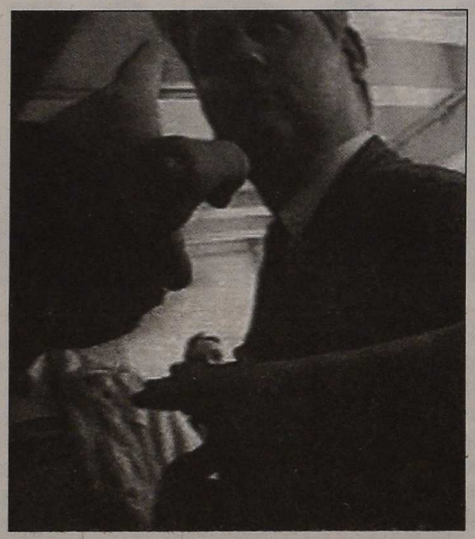
Re:Action

Newsletter of the Neoist Alliance Neither Pascal Nor Descartes! No. 6 Summer Solstice 1997



DIVVY! After being alchemically processed by the Neoist Alliance, Larry O'Hara discovers that even when resorting to violence he's unable to disrupt the Word Bombs literary conference at the Oval Theatre, May 1996.

Science, Politics & Gnosticism

ELEVEN THESES ON ALCHEMY

What I believe to be the hidden core of my life will not easily be deciphered, even when I tell, as here, the outer circumstances.

William Carlos Williams.

1 Alchemy is not beauty in itself, for beauty is a static ideal. Our art is not gay or sad, light or dark, black or white. We have had enough of spiritualism and astrological academies, mere laboratories of formalist ideas. The goal of our art is not gold nor yet the applause of the crowd. Every prophet finally arrives at the bank astride a hobby-horse, the door opened to the possibility that the mystic's red palm is stinging from being crossed with vast amounts of silver.

2 Alchemy doesn't reach the voracious mass. It is the work of creators and issues from a real necessity of the alchemist and for the alchemist. It demonstrates the knowledge of a supreme egoism, where laws wilt. Each demonstration of this art must explode, either through a profound and heavy seriousness, the whirlwind, dizziness, the new, the eternal, through the enthusiasm of principles, or by the way in which the alchemist reveals his or her existence to those with the wit to apprehend it. Here is a tottering and fleeing world, engaged to the bells of the infernal scale.

3 Already the edifice of our language is too undermined for anyone to recommend that alchemy continue to take refuge in it. And before rebuilding it is essential to cast down what still seems solid, what makes a show of still standing. The words that the artifice of logic still lumps together must be separated, isolated. They must be forced to parade again before virgin eyes like the animals after the deluge, issuing one by one from the ark, before any conjuration. And if, through some old and purely typographic convention, they are set end to end in a single line, take care to arrange them in a disorder in which they have no reason to follow one another. The evolution of our art is of a cyclical order. It proceeds by bounds, interruptions, and the antagonistic shock of currents explored. Each of these is denied, negated, and assimilated by what follows.

4 The need to find explanations for that which has no other reason than to be made, simply, without discussion, with the minimum of criteria or criticism, is like auto-kleptomania perpetually putting the same thing in different pockets. The species is poor because it robs itself. It's not the difficulty of understanding life which is involved; but the (de)individuated stealing the elements of their own personality. The alchemist fructifies the metal, letting feelings sleep. We put an owl in a hexagon, sing in hexameters, use angles. Euclidean geometry is dry and old. A wayward line kills theories. Ideas poison alchemy. If the poison carries a sonorous name from the big philological belly, alchemy becomes contagion; and if one rejoices in that intestinal muscularity, the mixture becomes a danger.

5 Humidity of past ages. Those who feed on tears are satisfied and heavy. But for the abundance and explosion, the alchemist knows how to fire hope. This desire boils for enthusiasm, fruitful form of intensity. The spirit of that negative man, always ready to let himself be killed by the merry-go-round of the wind and trampled by the shower of meteors, goes beyond sweet hysteria settled in sumptuous mock Egyptian apartments.

continued at back

FROM CELTI
TO COMMU

In Anglo-Saxon countries religion enters as an important element into the system of moral dualism. Official France has deprived itself of this important resource. While the British masonry is incapable of comprehending a universe without God, and, similarly, a parliament without a king, or property without the proprietor, the French masons have deleted "the Great Architect of the Universe" from their statutes. In political deals the wider the couches are, the better the service: to sacrifice earthly interests for the sake of heavenly problematics would imply going headlong against Latin lucidity. Politicians, however, like Archimedes, require a fulcrum; the will of the Great Architect had to be supplanted by values on this side of the great divide. The first of these is – France... Nowhere is the "religion of patriotism" spoken of so readily as in the secular republic...

Leon Trotsky.

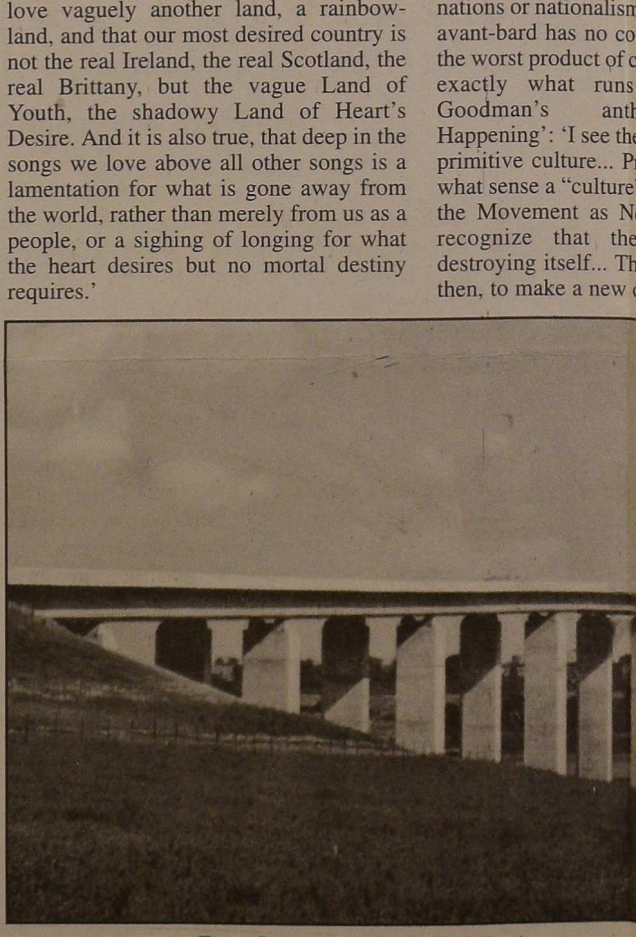
IT IS WELL KNOWN that avant-bard activities are structured as an ongoing attack on all forms of nationalism. However, rather than pointlessly reproducing avant-garde values by trying to supersede them, our attack is a form of self-consumption. If the avant-garde was originally a military term, it's meaning was transformed after the Swiss authorities suppressed the anarchist newspaper *L'avant-garde* edited by Paul Brousse and Prince Peter Kropotkin in 1878. *L'Avant-garde* was smuggled across the border to its principal audience in France. This clandestine activity hadn't even begun when the anarchist integralist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon – who was notorious as a supporter of a French identity rooted in celtic mysticism – snuffed it in 1865.

Proudhon's social chauvinism knew few bounds, a squib he authored in 1849 is typical: 'My only faith, love and hope lie in Liberty and my Country... the oak trees of our druidic forests weep for their ancient country...' &c., &c. Kropotkin's principal connections to celtic nationalism are to be found in northern Britain rather than France. In Edinburgh the anarchist autocrat gravitated to the circle gathered around Patrick Geddes and William Sharp – a veritable trope of cross-dressing intellectuals — who combined 'scientific' pursuits with the work of 'recreating' a non-existent 'Scotland' from pure 'spirit'. Sharp published *The Pagan Review* and secured a Civil List pension on the strength of a verbal assurance that he was, in fact, Fiona Macleod – the mysterious author of twelve celtic romances. Geddes held the botany professorship at Dundee University but as far as possible avoided 'science'.

The opening of *Iona* is typical of Fiona Macleod's prose: 'In spiritual geography Iona is the Mecca of the Gael. It is but a small isle, fashioned of a little sand, a few grasses salt with the spray of an ever-restless wave, a few rocks that wade in heather and upon whose brows the sea-wind weaves the yellow lichen. But since the remotest days sacrosanct men have bowed here in worship. In this little island a lamp was lit whose flame lighted pagan Europe, from the Saxon in his fens to the swarthy folk who came by Greek waters to trade the Orient. Here Learning and Faith had their tranquil home, when the shadow of the sword lay upon all lands, from Syracuse by the Tyrrhene Sea to the rainy isles of Orcc. From age to age, lowly hearts have never ceased to bring their burthen here. Iona herself has given us for remembrance a fount of youth more wonderful than that which lies under her own boulders of Dûn-I. And here hope waits. To tell the story of Iona is to go back to God, and to end in God.'

Today, Fiona was reincarnated as a delightful foot-fetishist – confounding obelisks, pyramids, the Sphinx, Christ crucified, an angel, a flaming torch, a sickle and the rising sun. Fiona drinks Adnams Suffolk Strong Ale and Islay malts. More than a minute ago, she repudiated the William Sharp alter-ego who cajoled her into writing in *The Contemporary Review* circa 1900: 'I think our people have most truly loved their land, and their country and their songs, and their ancient traditions, and that the word of bitterest savour is that sad word of exile. But it is also true that in love we love vaguely another land, a rainbow-land, and that our most desired country is not the real Ireland, the real Scotland, the real Brittany, but the vague Land of Youth, the shadowy Land of Heart's Desire. And it is also true, that deep in the songs we love above all other songs is a lamentation for what is gone away from the world, rather than merely from us as a people, or a sighing of longing for what the heart desires but no mortal destiny requires.'

Scotland or Irelan
the avant-bard has n
need the band, t
warlocks, bongos,
beards. Fiona had son
they repeated her mi
repeating them toda
there's no difference
world but not in circu
choosing. What w
collection of hippie
Goodman called h
Movement Toward A
needs a new America
France, the Isle of
nations or nationalism
avant-bard has no co
the worst product of c
exactly what runs
Goodman's anth
Happening': 'I see the
primitive culture... P
what sense a "culture
the Movement as N
recognize that the
destroying itself... Th
then, to make a new



The Orwell Bridge, Suffolk: the two sex

CISM
NISM

d, its all an illusion, o country. We don't he tribe, witches, bangles, beads or ne grandchildren and istakes. They're still y. 1890s or 1960s, Wo/man makes the mstances of her own vould you call a ephemera? Mitchell is anthology *The New America.* Who ? Who needs Britain, Man? Who needs ı? Not you or me, the untry. Primitivism is ivilisation and this is through Mitchell ology. 'What's e Movement, then, as rimitive then. But in "? I see the people of ew Americans, who old America is ey see the necessity, ulture...'

Lee Baxandall is represented in Goodman's anthology by his 'Spectacles and Scenarios: A Dramaturgy of Radical Activity'. Like so much movement/yippie/new 'left' guff, this piece is quintessential anarcho-bolshevism: 'Lenin was in hiding during many crucial days in 1917, and Trotsky was again the most motive figure, if not quite as predominantly as in 1905. His book on 1917, *The Russian Revolution,* is a virtual promptbook of radical dramaturgy. Trotsky remarks for example the little latitude left to the spectacle managers once things get going: the scripts for the roles of Romanov and Capet were prescribed by the general development of the historic drama, only the nuances of interpretation fell to the lot of the actors. The rebels' scenario inventiveness is brought out – as during the February overthrow, when a unit of the feared Cossacks appeared before a group of unarmed workers, who "took off their caps and approached the Cossacks with the words: Brothers-Cossacks, help the workers in a struggle for their peaceable demands, you see how the Pharaohs treat us, hungry workers. Help us!" This consciously humble manner, those caps in their hands – what an accurate psychological calculation! The whole history of street fights and revolutionary victories swarms with such improvisations.'

Running through all this, then as now, a key figure for anarcho-primitivism, is Gary Snyder. From *Earth Household:* 'The traditional cultures are in any case doomed, and rather than cling to their good aspects hopelessly it should be remembered that whatever is or ever was in any other culture can be reconstructed through the unconscious, through meditation. In fact, it is my own view that the coming revolution will close the circle and link us in many ways with the most creative aspects of our archaic past. If we are lucky we may eventually arrive at a totally integrated world culture with matrilineal descent, free-form marriage, natural-credit communist economy, less industry, far less population and lots more national parks.'

Listen to Snyder's arrant bullshit: an integrated world culture with 'groovy' forms of alienation – descent, marriage, credit and national parks. The avant-bard wants to do away with all these things and itself. We want to abolish private property and end the alienation that stems from the division of labour – we want communism, not a natural-credit 'communist' economy! Thirty years ago, Snyder offered us buddhism and the 'coming revolution' – now we've got a 'hip' capitalist working under the assumed name Hakim Bey, touting sufism and the 'coming revolution'. Bey isn't working towards liberation, he's synthesising a new American identity. He used to work for the Shah of Iran, all forms of reaction are grist to his mill. Replacing the Protestant work ethic with a cry of 'gone to Croatan' makes Bey's sales pitch 'tri-racial' – i.e. still 'racial'. Down with Orientalism! Down with all national identities!

You want a great 'American' with an overview of different civilisations? Try Ignatius Donnelly, the man who gave popular form to the Atlantis legend and went on to discover the notorious 'Baconian cipher' in Shakespeare's plays. 'Romania/France' has Tristan Tzara, the former dadaist who spent the final years of his life on a complicated series of anagrams he'd 'discovered' in the work of Rabelais and Villon. Naturally, Tzara the 'anti-artist' with crank 'critical' methods found fresh works to attribute to his subjects. Tzara spending the last days of his life painfully moving to and fro as he worked on the Rabelais manuscript, finally signalling from under an oxygen tent corrections to be made in the text. The avant-bard understands the value of fraud, it knows that not wanting to be dada is to replicate dada. The avant-bard spits on the memory of all those who attract epigones.

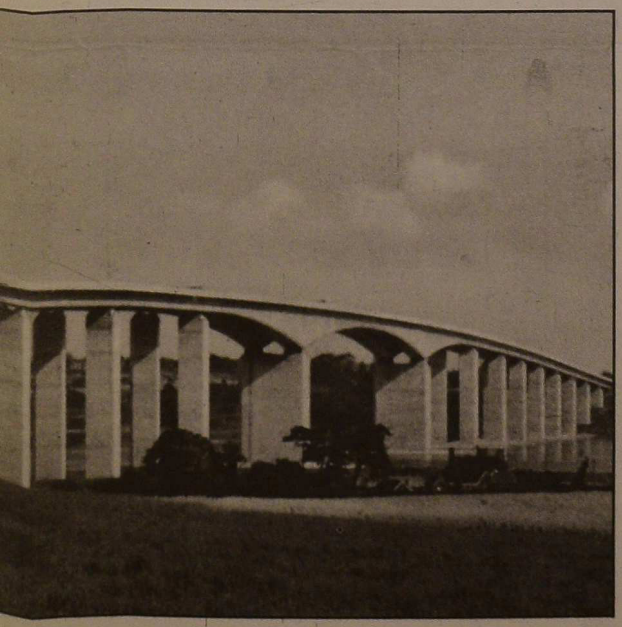
Today, Fiona Macleod was reborn as the funny wo/man in a farce staged on the theatre of the world. Fiona broadens traditional notions of social struggle to encompass everything that is positive in contemporary urban folk culture. The manipulation and overthrow of the language of myths is Fiona's starting point. She ransacks the archetypes of popular culture, as well as those thrown up by techno-Pagan religious revivalists. Fiona Macleod is not the product of a pre-democratic and pre-individual view of the world that lays claim to a despotic social unity. Avant-bardism is a lucid shamanism that situates itself AROUND, BETWEEN and BENEATH democracy and individuality. As a druid, Fiona Macleod supports free chaotic empathy between all creatures. Anyone can be Fiona Macleod simply by adopting the name. Plug into the General Intellect, become Fiona Macleod before Fiona Macleod comes gunning for you. Pursue Fiona Macleod before Fiona Macleod pursues you. No one deserves to be in jail.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Anarchist Integralism: Aesthetics, Politics and the Après-Garde by Luther Blissett. Send 12 first class stamps to Sabotage Editions, BM Senior, London WC1N 3XX.

In July, Serpent's Tale will publish *Mind Invaders: A Reader in Psychic Warfare, Cultural Sabotage and Semiotic Terrorism* edited by Stewart Home, an anthology of material by the Neoist Alliance, LPA, AAA, Anti-Euclidean Action, Manchester Area Psychogeographic, Outer Spaceways Incorporated, Workshop for a Non-Linear Architecture, Equi-Phallic Alliance, Luther Blissett Project, Decadent Action and others; the tome costs £9.99 and will be available from all good bookshops.

Also published by Serpent's Tail in July at £8.99 is *Come Before Christ And Murder Love,* an extraordinary account of spookery, mind control and occultism by Stewart Home.



xes travel in the company of a third.

PSYCHIC RALLY
ORFORD NESS LIGHTHOUSE

Members of CR^2 should assemble at 6.30 am.

Monday 13 October

continued from front

Whether it be forms, colours, volumes, sounds, or words which enter as mediators in the working out of this thing, it is by denying their specific nature that the alchemist renders them capable of acting, so that they will be reintegrated according to the new and more general nature which henceforth is attached to them.

6 The alchemist understands that the next stage in the art exists only in the moment of intensity where beauty and life, concentrated on the heights of a metal wire, ascend toward the fire. Numerous are those who no longer look for solutions in the object and in its relationships with the exterior; they are cosmic or elemental, resolute, wise, simple, serious. This is an essential quality of the work. It implies order which is a necessary condition for the life of any organism. Multiple, diverse and distant elements are, more or less intensely, concentrated in the work. The alchemist collects them, selects, arranges, and makes from them a solution. The temperature of the solution is in the first place, a point of no consequence: still with the increase or diminution of the temperature, there comes a point where this state of cohesion undergoes a qualitative change, and the solution is converted into steam or ice. Quantity is not only capable of alteration, i.e., of increase or diminution: it is naturally and necessarily a tendency to exceed itself.

7 There are two principles in the cosmic: a) to give an equal importance to each object, being, material, organism of the universe; b) to accentuate the importance of our species, subordinating things to her, beings, objects etc. The core of this latter principle is a psychological method; the danger lies in the tendency toward correction. It is a matter of letting the subject become what she will. The alchemist is carried along by the chance of succession and impression. For the first principle, the need takes another form: to place the species alongside other elements just as she is, in order to improve her. Work together anonymously on the great cathedral of life which is our project, outing those instincts which would – if the personality were to be unduly stressed – take on the proportions of Babylonian evil and cynicism.

8 Alchemy is a quality of a given psychic movement, a release of forces which, responding to the action of an as yet unknown compulsion, is capable of causing certain phenomena to pass from one state of being to another in the direction of a synthesis which is a quantitative act of knowledge, and which we call the blackening. The serpent, centring itself in a point of a line formed by the boundary between the white and the black, draws its substance by making the mass in the depths converge toward this point. The dragon, having been born at the same junction and also represented by a point, projects out to the exterior world through divergence and in a superior form corresponding to those which lie in a latent state in the depths of the inner world. The materia must be immodest, insolent and brutal, if it is not to fall into annulment.

9 The next stage consists in learning to move from one thing to another according to metaphorical mode. This movement, excluding by its very dynamism all that is organic, that is to say the natural and continuous use of transfer in the process of reduction and dissolution, might be explained as a method of systematising forgetfulness. Despite the hermetic appearance of alchemy – that personal algebra formed from the process of symbolisation, which to be translated requires both study and intuition – it is inextricably linked to encounters with certain psychic archetypes. Thus it is necessary to abandon the tinsel of words and images and merge one's identity with the work. Alchemy is a passage. It tends to integrate itself into life by abandoning its form. The transformation which its form has undergone through putrefaction leads to other changes and can go so far as to make it lose its perceptible characteristics.

10 The lycanthropic determinant is, so to speak, subterranean. It is present only in an impulse which remains invisible throughout the work. Thus the portion of non-directed action is greater in it. The signification itself tends to disappear under the pressure of the surge provoked by the powerful movements it induces. Creation matters little now, there can be neither equilibrium nor rest. To the question: is alchemy a reality in itself or does it serve to represent an imagined reality, certain charlatans have answered by opting for the second proposition. This reaction against alchemy that has its goal in its own means, risks becoming in its turn the expression of a more general confusion. However, stability is only an imperceptible moment. Thus fools are led to believe that in contrast to the appearance of a sensory hypertrophy, it would be easy to set up effectively and without suppression of details, the rotating precipitation of an accelerated world.

11 We can now say that alchemy has retraced the path along which plastic forms, from the anonymous arts to the skilful expressions of the Renaissance, have been invented. By re-examining the means of creation by which our species has forced itself through the ages to synthesise its representations of the world, alchemy denies not only the object of that representation but also the schemes of interpretation which had hardened at different periods and in different parts of the world.

To receive *Re:Action* irregularly please send three 2nd class postage stamps to:

Neoist Alliance

BM Senior

London WC1 3XX

and you will receive the next two issues.
Elsewhere please send US $1 per issue (cash only).

Donations Welcome

Cheques payable to: Cash